

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A spin-valve thin-film magnetic element includes a laminate including a free magnetic layer and a pinned magnetic layer. A pair of hard bias layers is provided on both sides of the laminate to orient the magnetic moment of the free magnetic layer in one direction. A pair of insulating layers extend over the hard bias layers and both top ends of the laminate in the track width direction. A pair of lead layers is provided on the insulating layers. Each lead layer has an overlay section extending over the insulating layer and the laminate. The edge of the overlay section is in direct contact with the central portion of the laminate.